

# *The* **PULPIT**

*A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching*

FEBRUARY, 1950

## **The Religious Roots of Democracy**

By HAWLEY LYNN

## **Extension Ladders**

By MARVIN A. JOHNSON

## **Washington's Enhancing Alliances**

By ORVA LEE ICE

## **The Riddle of Life**

By GEORGE C. FETTER

## **It Can Happen To You**

By REUBEN K. YOUNGDAHL

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## **What Makes a Good Sermon?**

SERIES II

The PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

Charles Clayton Morrison, Editor

Entered as second-class matter May 14, 1942, at Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under the act of March 3, 1879. Copyrighted 1949 by Christian Century Foundation, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5. Published monthly, 25 cents a copy. \$2.50 a year.

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Features For March

A PILOT'S FAITH is an unusual sermon by Elmer S. Gorman of Los Gatos, California. Mr. Gorman is a Flight Captain for TWA.

GLIMPSES OF GREATNESS was delivered by G. Curtis Jones of Richmond, Virginia, on The Church of the Air, CBS network, August 7, 1949. The sermon offers inspiring portraits of human greatness.

THE LORD IS MY LIGHT is Francis B. Sayre's answer to the question, "Have we Christians a right to look to Christianity for the answer to the world's problems?" and was delivered before the Chicago Sunday Evening Club on December 11, 1949.

BLESSED ARE THE DEBONAIR is another radio sermon delivered by William G. Law of Minneapolis, Minnesota. It is a thought-provoking commentary on one of Christ's beatitudes—"Blessed are the Meek."

GOD AND THE TAX ASSESSOR by Eugene M. Austin, omitted in February, will be published in the March issue.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SERMON?—Series III, will feature articles written by four laymen: S. Kendrick Guernsey of Jacksonville, Florida; Governor Luther W. Youngdahl of Minnesota; Bradshaw Mintener of Pillsbury Mills, Inc.; and Charles P. Taft of Cincinnati, Ohio. There will also be a sermon by the pastor of the second church in the series of "Great Churches of America" studied by the editors of *The Christian Century*.

Binders for The Pulpit are now available.

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

Hawley Lynn is a graduate of Yale Divinity School and has recently left his Methodist pastorate in Pickens, South Carolina, to become the Director of Adult Work for the South Carolina Methodist Conference Board of Education.

Marvin A. Johnson, since 1948, has been pastor of the Community Methodist Church in El Segundo, California. He is a graduate of Boston University School of Theology.

Orva Lee Ice has had two sermons selected by *The Churchman* as the "Sermon of the Week." He was a Baptist pastor in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for 13 years before moving to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he is now pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church. Also he serves as chairman of

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George C. Fetter is a graduate of the Rochester Theological Seminary and holds a Master's Degree from the University of Chicago. For 17 years he was pastor of the University Baptist Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and is now pastor of the First Baptist Church of Lawrence, Kansas.

Reuben K. Youngdahl has been pastor of the Mount Olivet Augustana Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, since 1938. He is a graduate of Augustana Seminary which school has also granted him the D.D. degree. A few years ago he was chairman of Mayor (now Senator) Hubert Humphrey's Committee on Human Relations. In 1944 Mr. Youngdahl

was named the outstanding young man of Minneapolis.

John H. Blacklidge is pastor of Grace Methodist Church in New York City.

G. A. Casaday is professor of homiletics in the Pacific School of Religion.

James Dalton Morrison is Cornelius Woelfkin Professor of Preaching in the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School.

George M. Gibson is professor of homiletics in McCormick Theological Seminary.

Halford E. Luccock is professor of homiletics in Yale Divinity School.

## THE EDITOR'S PAGE

### The Event of the Month

**A**BOUT forty officially appointed delegates representing seven denominations met at Greenwich, Conn., in December to explore the possibility of uniting their churches in one church. Over a period of three days they took earnest counsel together and adjourned having reached the unanimous conclusion that an organic union was within the range of practical possibility. The group represented the Methodist, Presbyterian U.S.A., Congregational Christian, Disciples of Christ, Evangelical and Reformed, Zion Methodist and Moravian denominations with a total membership of about 18 million. Observers were sent by the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Society of Friends. On the final day, the conference organized itself as a permanent body, "The Conference on Church Union," to promote organic union and to study ways and means of achieving it.

**The Greenwich Conference** Bishop Ivan Lee Holt, Methodist, was elected president with Dr. William B. Pugh, stated clerk of the Presbyterian General Assembly, vice-president, and Dr. Mark A. Dawber, recording secretary. The employment of an executive secretary was authorized. The conference looked beyond the union of these seven denominations toward a united Protestantism in America, and held that the merger of those bodies which "recognize one another's ministries and sacraments" (including others not represented at Greenwich) would contribute powerfully to the achievement of the more inclusive union. I believe this is the true procedure, and I left Greenwich with higher hopes than I have ever carried away from any ecumenical gathering, not excepting Amsterdam. Some day, my brethren, we shall see an ecumenical united church in these United States! You will hear more from the "Conference on Church Union," when it has had sufficient time to reach a consensus on procedure and goal.

### The Book of the Month

**PRINCE OF EGYPT**, by Dorothy Clark Wilson. Westminster Press. \$3.50.

**T**HIS is a historical novel. Its hero is Moses, the child of Hebrew parents who became a prince of the royal household. At the height of his prestige, with every prospect of succession, he abandoned his position and led the movement for the freedom of his own enslaved people. The author makes the scene in ancient Egypt—its court, its religion, the Hebrew slaves, their oppression, the geography, the social customs, all so far away in time and space—come alive as if it were near-by and contemporary. The details are drawn from the scant biblical account, but the gaps are filled in with a humanizing imagination that has

checked itself at every point with the biblical record and the discoveries of the modern Egyptologist. The origin of Moses' monotheism is seen in a highly probable context. Though the story ends with the crossing of the Red Sea, the reader is fully prepared to imagine for himself the eventual giving of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai—the event which marks the definitive integration of the Hebrew people as a unique nation. The personality of Moses is depicted in warm, realistic terms as a man enthralled by a great vision but humanly hesitant and beset by the inner conflict involved in renouncing the prize of marriage to the famed princess, Nefrititi, and the throne that would go with it. Taken as a story this book is a lofty work of art. Its fascination is irresistible. The characters, including its hero, are drawn true to their period and invested with the loves and hates that belong to human nature everywhere in history.

### A Thought for the Month

**T**HE priests of religion are always tempted to oversell their cult. They write drafts upon the divine will which it is not in God's purpose or character to honor. The modern brood of "metaphysical" religions leads people to expect rewards in the form of material goods or business success or cure of disease or achievement of a particular ambition, all of which reduces religion to near-magic. Even ministers

#### Overselling Religion

of the Christian faith are easily tempted to give irresponsible assurances as to what God may be expected to do. Has not our revivalism often oversold the conversion experience and left many honest souls mourning because they "found it not"? Nowhere does the New Testament emphasize the subjective aspect of conversion as something to be sought. It emphasizes the Object of faith to which one is converted. We are beginning now to see that the social gospellers have oversold utopia as the ultimate meaning of the Kingdom of God in history. Our scholars and teachers are now endeavoring to disentangle our faith from this unrealistic and unbiblical hope. I wonder if we ministers, in our eagerness to be of help to people in trouble, are not tempted to indulge in words of comfort that are too cheap. Most of us have an all too easy solution of the problem of suffering and evil. Such movements as Buchmanism with its "guidance" technique have awakened fantastic expectations which lead either to fanaticism or to disillusionment. Our God is not a capricious God and his will cannot be bent to our human will by some magical formula. "Thy will be done," is the ultimate expression of Christian faith. There is a great text for what I am saying: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

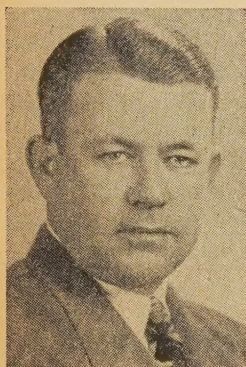
*Charles Clayton Krumm*

# The Religious Roots of Democracy

By HAWLEY LYNN

*"Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother . . . ?"*

WHEN YOU have had to hear your community discussed in the press, on the radio, and in bus and trolley as a "lynchtown," probably you would wish that you could find some relief from that disturbing accusation when you came to church on Sunday to wor-



ship. But the crime committed in the lynching of Willie Earle, negro, a prisoner of the state awaiting trial in a court of justice, is such a grievous violation of the laws of God and of man; and we are all so bound up in its causes and its consequences, that eventually it must be faced by the people who make up the Church of Jesus Christ. We must look at the deed squarely; face it in the pres-

ence of him who spoke to his people through the mouth of the prophet Isaiah: "... when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." Whose hands are full of blood? WHO lynched Willie Earle?

Quickly some loyal citizen of this county answers, "Citizens from a neighboring county; not we." That is the answer from which we have tried to draw a little comfort since the evidence has been made public that no citizen of our county was in the band who took Willie Earle from our county jail. "This act does not represent us," was the answer heard up and down our streets. We resented being mentioned in the news as responsible for lawlessness and mob violence. In order that the world might know that *our* community did not support lynch mobs, a public gathering was called to meet in the school to draw up their declaration of disapproval and pledge their support to the officers commissioned to preserve the law. Evidently the supporters of human rights, outraged public-spirited citizens, Christian statesmen were, with very few exceptions, occupied in more pressing pursuits. Those who spoke their views on the incident gave more proof than contradiction to the published statement that ours was a "lynch-town." In a public gathering, the heirs of American freedom were seen to trample human rights underfoot and commit a lynching in their hearts. Those few citizens who came expecting common repudiation of mob justice went home ashamed and sick at their stomachs.

Citizens of another county? Not for one moment! One official from this community expressed his opinion thus: "The only reason our citizens were not involved was that they did not know the incident had occurred

until it was over." The hot tempers and the violent proposals expressed at a public meeting called to repudiate lynch justice supports this opinion.

## WHO LYNCHED WILLIE EARLE?

But we have "good" citizens in this county. Let us turn to them with our question, "Who lynched Willie Earle?" With some show of disgust they reply, "A lawless mob?"

But did 31 men, who at gun's point demanded that the jailer release his prisoner, commit this crime on their own responsibility? Would they have dared come unmasked and undisguised if they had known that the whole weight of moral disapproval in the community would fall upon them? Would 31 violent men have taken a prisoner from the state and dealt out their own brand of vengeance if they had known beyond question that the *good* people, the "solid citizens," would have supported and undergirded the courts in bringing them to justice? Ask the good citizens eligible for jury service what their verdict would be if they should be chosen to sit in judgment upon the men being tried for lynching a negro accused of taking a white man's life. Already you suspect the answer. Too many have openly declared, "If I were a juror, I'd acquit them all," and in those words they have become accessory to murder. Let it be admitted that the crime with which Willie Earle is charged is as brutal as that committed upon him. Our courts have a record of being rather exacting with negroes who are tried for taking a white man's life, and the courts had begun their efficient work. With a kind of logic which it is difficult to fathom, "good citizens" have been heard to say, "Why of course I want our laws to work in this democracy, but lynching was just what this man deserved." With such twisted thinking and violent words, truth is perverted and democratic justice is doomed.

There is another group whom we should question about this miscarriage of justice: the church people. Surely from Christian men and women we can get an unbiased answer. "Who lynched Willie Earle?" Their reply is pious enough: "Wicked men, ungodly souls without the love of Christ!" But we want to know which men without the love of Christ. Was it the 31 who combined to take a negro prisoner from his cell when his guilt was not proved and mutilated his body, or men without the love of Christ who hold their fellowmen with skin the color of Willie Earle's in such low regard that they consider them of inferior worth? In a "law-abiding" community where white prisoners are not in danger of being taken from jail by lynch mobs, who is really responsible for the lynching of a negro prisoner? the band who actually spilled his blood or those of us in the church and county who

say of Willie Earle and his kind, "Raca!—a wild and worthless nigger?"

The lynching of Willie Earle didn't just happen on this February 17; it began a long time ago. It began when his parents taught him that he was "black folks" and must always tip his hat to white folk and give way to them. It developed when he walked to school through rain and mud while the bus for white children passed him on the road. It grew as he left school early to hoe cotton in the Spring, and entered late in the Fall when the cotton was all picked on a tenant farm. It matured as Willie Earle learned that there were only certain jobs open to negro boys. The stage was set for it when Willie Earle learned that in a world where men of power and achievement drove their own automobiles, the only way an underprivileged negro could feel important was to get drunk on liquor from the white operator's store and ride in the white man's taxi. Then on a night when alcohol made him feel bold and masterful, he was one man against one man. Willie Earle showed how important a black man could be in a world where he felt the white man's foot upon his neck. He took a white taxi operator's life.

That is our world, the world of us good citizens, good church people. We are helping to produce Willie Earles, just as we, by our indifference to human needs, are setting up conditions where men feel free to get rid of the Willie Earle's whom they help to produce.

#### WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

In a public meeting in this community we got one answer to this problem: "We've got to put our foot on them and keep them down." That has been tried. In some quarters of the world it still is being tried. For centuries, strong men ruled their fellow men by the weight of superior might. Tribal chieftains, witch doctors, princes, kings, dictators of many kinds held over their subjects the power of life and death. Eventually the tyrants built up the principle known as "The divine right of kings." Rulers were counted to hold their positions of power by the authority of God, and any subject who questioned it was risking his immortal soul. But something in the mind and soul of man, regimented though he was, gave him the feeling that he should have some voice in choosing his rulers, and in making the laws by which he lived among other men.

There is something miraculous in the fact that "the little man," taught and conditioned to revere kingly authority as divine, should ever lift up his head and say to himself, "The God who made kings made me!"

The rise of democratic government has been a thrilling story, though sometimes a bloody one. Through revolution, the unceasing toil and spiritual devotion of countless individuals, ideas of liberty and equality and fraternity have taken shape in men's minds. The ancient Greeks were first to try democratic rule. But their democracy failed because in the Greek city states there existed an institution which denied the basic principles of democracy: slavery. According to one historian, democracy failed in Athens, the birthplace of democracy, for a reason which sounds as modern as next week and as rational as the Ku Klux Klan; Athe-

nians restricted the right of voting to men of Athenian descent. In modern terms, they were so intent upon establishing the "white primary" and white supremacy that they lost their democratic rule. At least one Southern state has stricken from its statute books all laws governing primary elections, all guarantees of honest election methods and the printing of ballots, for one purpose: to prevent its negro citizens from voting.

The failure of Athenian democracy was followed by 16 centuries of tyranny and rule by the powerful, until the English barons and bishops in 1215 wrested from King John the Magna Carta. For another 5 centuries, the rights of common people were gained only by difficult struggle.

From 1640 to the present, the influence of the Bible, especially the teachings of the prophets and of Jesus, has given men in all walks of life a new sense of human dignity and of their worth as children of one Father. John Milton, whose religious devotion none questions, wrote in those early days of struggle for the rights of the common man, "Give me liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." And later Milton said, "No man who knows anything can be so stupid to deny that all men naturally were born free, being the image and resemblance of God himself . . ."

From these roots, in the minds and hearts of men who read their Bibles, among men who remembered the words of Jesus on behalf of the oppressed and the disinherited, democracy grew in the soil of America. It is one of the strangest facts in American life that we who are so proud of winning our liberties from an oppressive, colonizing nation should seek to deny representation in government to one tenth of our population.

#### DEMOCRACY WILL WIN

We have seen through the ages that man will not be forever content to let the heel of restriction rest upon his neck. But in this community, in the 20th century, one answer still being given to the problem of races living together is, "We must put our foot upon them." Men who have any respect for themselves or any regard for their worth and dignity always will want what is restrictively denied them, and will die for it if they feel that it is theirs by inherent right. The strength of our nation springs from its idealism, the confidence of every individual that he may become all that his diligence and intelligence will enable him to achieve. But we hold ourselves back; we check our progress when we devote so much energy to restricting the rights of any group among us. James Weldon Johnson, the negro poet, has asked us a probing question:

How will you have us, men or things?  
Rising, or falling; powerful, or weak?  
Strong, willing sinews to your wings?  
On binding chains about you feet?

It is no accident that man has struggled through possibly 24 centuries to stand erect, and to call his

body and soul his own. Somewhere there was breathed into his consciousness an assurance that the God who made all men made him, and that God is no respecter of persons, not even of the mighty. In all our inconsistencies of pledging allegiance to "... one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," it is encouraging that at least we have the decency not to try to claim moral and spiritual justification for the discriminations which we practice. We may take heart that those who deny men their rights do not claim the voice of conscience or of Christ or devotion to the will of God. In his image he made us all, made us living souls, breathing his free air and drawing our sustenance freely from his earth. It is not by pride or arrogance that we shall behold his glory, whether it be black man's arrogance or white man's pride. Where is the answer, O Christ of Galilee, save at thy wounded feet?

I slept, I dreamed, I seemed  
To climb a hard ascending track;  
And just behind me labored one  
Whose skin was black.  
I pitied him, but hour by hour  
He gained upon my path.  
He stood beside me; stood upright!  
And then I turned in wrath.  
"Go back," I cried, "what right  
Have you to stand beside me here?"  
I paused struck dumb with fear;  
For lo, the black man was not there  
But Christ stood in his place.  
And oh! the pain, the pain, the pain  
That looked from that dear face.

It was while John Greenleaf Whittier was visiting in India that he witnessed the incident which led to the writing of the poem now known as "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind." He had seen the priest of a primitive Indian religious sect brew a pagan potion, and then, drinking it, he stormed in a drunken, mad religious frenzy about the village. Calling attention to some of the pagan practices of his own day, Whittier wrote the lines which should become our fervent prayer:

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
Forgive our foolish ways,  
Reclothe us in our rightful minds,  
In purer lives thy service find;  
In deeper reverence, praise.

"I have just told the folks here in Springfield on this 110th anniversary of the birth of him whose name, mightiest in the cause of civil liberty, still mightiest in the cause of moral reformation, we mention in solemn awe, in naked deathless splendor, that the one victory we can ever call complete will be that one which proclaims that there is not one slave or one drunkard on the face of God's green earth. Recruit for this victory."—*Abraham Lincoln.*

## Extension Ladders

By MARVIN A. JOHNSON

AS I WAS LOOKING through some old Official Board minutes recently, I came upon an entry that I wish to use as the text for this sermon. It read: "Race problems were discussed for almost an hour. . . . It was moved, seconded and carried that an extension ladder be purchased."



How typical I thought. Everybody talks about the weather, but . . . ! We talk about the social problems of our day, we sometimes even pass high-sounding resolutions about them, but when it comes to doing something we often vote to—"purchase an extension ladder."

As I meditated upon this "text" it occurred to me that perhaps it is not so incongruous as it might seem. Perhaps what we do need as we seek to deal creatively with the problems that face us in this area of life are extension ladders!

What is an extension ladder? It is a tool or instrument that we use to climb to higher levels. But in our striving to climb to higher levels of life, only some of us have "extension ladders." Others must use old "crates and boxes." Think for a moment of the inadequate, segregated school facilities that are often provided for Negro children and you will appreciate how true this is.

Anyone who has done any mountain climbing knows that if we are going to reach the highest levels, we must climb together! Why don't we? The answer to that question can be found in a single word—prejudice. So this morning I want us to think together about prejudice—what it is, what it does, and what we can do about it.

### THE SOURCE OF PREJUDICE

Let us begin by suggesting that prejudice arises out of a feeling of superiority.

A friend of mine tells of a conversation he once had with a neighbor who did not want any "niggers" living next door to him. When he was asked why he did not want Negroes in the community he replied, "Because I'm superior to them, that's why." Now my friend is a very wise man, and he said to himself, "I can learn something out of this if I handle it rightly." So he said:

"What do you mean you are superior? Do you mean that you can run faster than Jesse Owens?"

"No," said the neighbor, "I don't mean that!"

"Well, what do you mean? Do you mean you can lick Joe Louis?"

"Oh, no, I don't mean that!"

"Well, do you mean that you can sing better than Paul Robeson or make more things out of a peanut

than George Washington Carver?"

"No, I don't mean that."

"Then just what do you mean?"

"Well," said the neighbor in exasperation, "I mean that I am superior, that's all!"

Most of our attitudes toward people of other races have about as much rational basis as that. We don't base our relationships with the Negro on what we think, but upon how we feel.

I was talking with Dr. Harvey Seifert, one of the professors in the School of Religion at the University of Southern California, about this problem the other evening and he said, "I don't know of any social problem where the arguments are so unanimously on one side." And they are. Religion says: Thou hast made of one blood all nations. The medical doctor comes along and says: There is no difference between the blood of a Negro and the blood of a white man. The scientist says: There is no inherent difference in intellectual capacity between the Negro and the white man. And so the arguments go. But they have little effect upon us and our everyday attitudes because in this situation our attitudes are determined largely by emotion, not reason.

Where did we get our ideas and attitudes that so largely determine our relationships with other races? Most of us began to acquire our attitudes in this area of human relationships long before we were old enough to think for ourselves. As Lillian Smith expressed it, "We learned about segregation when we were almost too little to know words. We who are white learned this lesson from the people we love most—our families. We learned about race at the same time we learned about God and sex. We knew from our mother's tone that we were learning important things. We hardly understood the reasons, but we knew there was a way to think about God, a way to think about our bodies—and a way to think about Negroes."

I think no man would ever attempt to pass judgment on a fellow Christian in this matter of racial attitudes if he understood the train of cause and effect that has led to prejudiced attitudes. Racial prejudice is woven into the very fabric of our social life in America, and I am afraid that very few persons have entirely escaped its effect.

Now, if we could just stop here it would be very comforting. We could say, "I acquired my racial attitudes so early in life that I am not responsible for them." But it is not so simple as that. God has given us, not only emotions; he has given us the power to think and to make choices, and we are morally responsible for the results that follow from the decisions we make.

### EVILS OF SEGREGATION

For this reason, it seems to me that it should be clear to all Christian people that we can no longer afford to harbor prejudices, no matter how understandable their psychological origin may be. There are profound social implications in this matter of racial discrimination and we dare not ignore them.

What are some of the implications of our segregated way of life?

First, segregation is a constant threat to the unity of our nation. During the war we achieved an amazing degree of unity. In the face of an external threat, the various groups forgot their own petty, personal interests and worked together as a team. But with the end of the war and the releasing of that external pressure which held us together, we have seen many of the disunifying forces beginning to operate again.

For example, 80% of the property in Los Angeles is restricted. This means that all of the non-Caucasians in that city are jammed into the least desirable part of town, living three, four, and five families to a single house.

What happens when this occurs? For one thing, the young people get out. It is too crowded. They can't stand the noise and confusion. They begin to run the streets. They sleep in all-night shows. They begin to run in gangs and finally end up in conflict with the authorities. I have heard people cite these "zoot-suit" gangs as a reason for continuing racial restrictions. But wait! Let's get the cause and effect relationship in its proper order here. The restrictions are one of the causes of these gangs, not the result. As long as we continue our restrictions and therefore force these people to live jammed up in undesirable quarters, we will continue to have these gangs and the consequent threat to the unity of our nation.

We need to remind ourselves that there are a few people in our society that are very happy about this disunity. They are the Communists. Disunity is the Communist's stock in trade. He not only welcomes it; he helps to promote it. If people are dissatisfied with one system, they may turn to Communism as an alternative.

There are some people in America who are afraid of Communism. They are continually conducting investigations and proposing legislation to outlaw the Communist Party. This is futile. We cannot achieve national unity by legislation alone. If we don't want the minority groups to turn to Communism, then the believers in Democracy have to offer them something better. Are we doing this today?

Now let us turn in another direction and see what effect prejudice and its accompanying restrictive covenants have upon the unity of our world.

During the war the Japanese weapon of racial propaganda in Asia had considerable effectiveness. This was not due to any particular skill in the way it was used, but because it was being presented to people who have had unfortunate experiences with English and American people. In a hundred different ways the Orientals were told: "The colored peoples of the world cannot expect to secure justice and equality from the white people because of their unalterable race prejudice."

It is true that the Japanese Propaganda Ministry is a thing of the past, but the same basic propaganda is being continued in the Orient today, and it will be better for us if we recognize the danger in this propaganda. As Pearl Buck has expressed it: "The truth is that the White man in the Far East too often has behaved without wisdom or justice to his fellow men."

It is worse than folly—it is dangerous today—not to recognize the truth, for in it lies the tinder for tomorrow. Who of us can doubt who has seen a white policeman beat a Chinese coolie in Shanghai, a white sailor kick a Japanese in Kobe, an English captain lash out with his whip at an Indian vender—who of us having seen such Oriental sights or heard the common contemptuous talk of the white man in any colored country, can forget the fearful bitter hatred in the colored face and the blaze in the dark eyes? Who of us can be so stupid as not to see the future written here?"

### CAUCASIANS ARE A MINORITY

When are we going to take seriously the fact that the white man is in a minority in our world? So far in our history, we have been in a position, because of certain technological advantages, to keep the colored man in subjection. And it may be that for a while longer we can sit complacently beside our stockpile of atomic bombs and continue this relationship. But if we are thinking of the future welfare of our children, we realize that this is a precarious situation. Prejudice is a "luxury" that we can no longer afford. Peace can be bought only as we cast aside our prejudice and embrace world brotherhood.

There is one other implication to our segregated way of life that we need to touch upon. As men and women seeking to face this problem in the light of the teachings of Jesus, we need to ask ourselves the question, what does segregation do to human personality?

A Negro minister said to a group of Caucasian ministers recently, "You cannot imagine what it means to be a Negro. We never know when we will be insulted. We never know when we will be humiliated by being refused service in a restaurant or store. We live with that constant fear day in and day out."

During the war an essay contest was conducted among the high school students of a certain city on the theme, "How Shall We Punish Hitler?" The winning essay was written by a Negro girl, and she said, in effect: "The most terrible punishment that I can think of would be to give Hitler a black skin and force him to live in America!"

Can we maintain our Christian integrity, can we stand with clean hands and a pure heart before God and continue to uphold a policy of segregation that warps the hearts and minds of our Negro brethren like that?

### CHILDREN ARE OUR HOPE

Let me ask one other question. How can we break into this vicious circle of segregation that leads to prejudice, which in turn leads to further segregation? As we have seen, prejudice has a deep, underlying emotional basis, therefore I believe that we must begin with our children. This does not mean that we have no obligation to do something about our own attitudes. But we could destroy race prejudice in a few years if we would let our children follow their natural inclinations. Chil-

dren are not naturally prejudiced. The New Yorker carried the story of a group of Negro and white children playing "race riots." It so happened that there were more white boys than there were colored, so some of the white boys volunteered to be "colored" boys to make the sides even. There is our hope for the future if we will only cultivate it!

The other day I stopped to visit Dan Genung, the minister of All Peoples Christian Church over on East 21st Street in Los Angeles. In connection with that church there is a day nursery for pre-school children whose parents work. We went over to see the children. It was noon time and we went into the dining room where 40 little children were sitting around their little tables waiting quietly to be served. There were Chinese, Japanese, one little blue-eyed Dutch girl, Mexicans, Negroes, and perhaps one or two other racial groups represented. As we stood there and watched those children eat together, Dan told me this true story:

About two years ago a little girl started coming to the nursery. Her father was a chronic alcoholic; there was constant quarreling and fighting in the home, and the little girl had been treated so badly that she was very bitter. One day shortly after she came, this little girl said to one of the teachers in the presence of some of the other children, "I hate everybody!" The teacher said to her, "You don't hate God do you?" "No," replied the child, "I don't hate God, but I hate everybody else." Just then a little four-year-old Chinese girl broke into the conversation and said, "I think God wants us to love everybody!"

"And he called a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven."

## Pastoral Prayer

By ROBERT RUSSELL WICKS

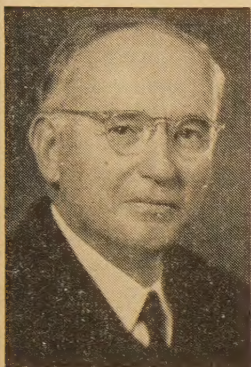
**A**LMIGHTY GOD to whom a thousand years are as a day, gird with thy strength those who go forth from their training here to regard not overmuch who is for them or against them, and to see well to it that they are ready to uncover truth that should be known, and be willing to break with evil custom though they invite scorn and the wrath of the mighty. In them may all prejudice find a deadly foe, and may the mind of Christ be made the manner of their thinking, that they may keep close to the common people who are used by thee to open new ways through man's stubborn desire to be undisturbed. May each of these Thy servants be a truly public man who represents not privilege but people, who spreads understanding and conveys Thine own insistence upon the dignity of man. Amen.

(Prepared by Dean Emeritus Robert Russell Wicks for the last service in which he participated at Princeton University Chapel, June 9, 1947.)

# Washington's Enhancing Alliances

By ORVA LEE ICE

THOMAS PAINE wrote, "The character of George Washington puts all men called kings to shame. While they are receiving from sweat and labor of mankind a prodigality of pay, to which neither their abilities nor their services entitle them, he is rendering every service in his power, and refusing every pecuniary reward. He accepted no pay as commander-in-chief."



Mr. Washington was a man of comfortable wealth. He had added to his domain by marrying a rich woman. Strong temptation must have engaged his mind to insure, protect, and augment his holdings; to take his ease since he had much goods laid up for many years. Therefore it is something out of ordinary behavior to see him tramping the snows of Valley Forge. Here was a man transcending the levels of commonplace living.

Valley Forge offered a quiver of excuses to exonerate him not only for cursing his spite that ever he was chosen to set the times in joint, but also for giving up the hopeless cause and returning to the comforts of his estate. Trusted officers had done so; had gone over to the enemy. The members of congress were thinking of themselves, more concerned about political prestige and patrimony than about the cause of liberty. Prototypes of Rhett Butler were making exorbitant profits out of goods sold to British and colonists. The whole cause seemed convincingly hopeless. It was foolhardy to engage Great Britain, the world's most formidable empire. His ally, France, was three thousand miles removed, and sailing vessels were slow. His own tattered soldiers were deserting in companies. Snow added its cold blanket of misery. Hunger reduced the weight of willingness. Why shouldn't he, the squire of Mount Vernon, save his wealth and health and relinquish the cause as presumptuous and untimely?

Out of travail are born the children of righteousness; these come out of great tribulation. Out of caves, cotes, stables, and log cabins mankind brings forth its messiahs. Out of Valley Forge a savior was born. There George Washington determined to wager his wealth, his life on the gospel of freedom. Here, the first citizen of his country, perhaps on his knees as the engraver John McRae pictured him, made his great alliances that assured victory for his countrymen and immortal tribute for himself.

## II

First, upon breaking with the outward king, he allied himself to the kingly within. He became loyal to the royalty in his own heart. The soul of George Wash-

ington stood up and the opposing armies stood aside.

None of us has exhausted the dauntless resources of his own soul. The philosopher who admonished, "Know thyself," was hoping that some one might discover and employ the latent possibilities of his soul's strength. Only the heart of man is a match for the world. No man is what he is; no man ever was. What obstacle, what might, what kingdom can defeat the man who has resolved to "stand high, unearthly, free-souled as a banner unfurled?" He can trust himself when all the world is doubting him; he can wait and not be tired by waiting; he can meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two imposters just the same; he can watch the things he has given his life to become broken and stoop and build them up with worn out tools; he can lose and start again at his beginnings, and never breathe a word about his loss; he can force his heart and nerve and sinew to serve long after they are gone; he can hold on when there is nothing in him except the will which says "hold on." He is the Man and there is no "if" about it. It has been done too many times to doubt it. The man Moses, the man Paul, the man Washington, the man Lincoln. The Man Christ Jesus!

What champion is able to stand against the man who believes in the power of his unconquerable soul? Such a man may be beaten but he can never be defeated. The soul of such never surrenders, neither does it die. The immortal souls have been they who, when all others lost faith in them, kept their faith in themselves. The disease of man is that he gives up too easily. George Washington may have been a rebel in English eyes but he was loyal to his royal self.

## III

Secondly, Washington made an alliance with a great need; a cause that cried for a champion; a necessity that called for a paladin.

Man can come to himself, can awake his dormant strength by allying himself with a weakness. A man may be a stripling, may never suspect how strong he is until some emergency challenges him to be stronger than he is. In the sudden demand of a fire, frail persons have been known to rush into the burning building and carry out heavy furniture beyond their normal powers to lift.

The challenge of a sudden need makes a champion. One who became a great boxing champion, who had always been cowardly and avoided trouble, discovered his strength when he was confronted by ruffians who were molesting a defenseless girl. He allied himself with her weakness, came out fighting, and the Gulliver he was broke his Liliputian threads and stood up.

Moses timorously escaping to Egypt, hiding in the bushes of the desert, argued with himself, Who am I that I should go? Let someone of greater mettle take the responsibility. But Moses could not stop his heart

from hearing the cries of his people's servitude. Confronted by the crying need, he refused alliance with the house of Pharaoh and allied himself with slaves; refused to be prince of Egypt and became an eternal prince. His royal mummy might have decorated some modern musty museum but because he struck hands with a people in crisis he crowned himself.

The scroll of history is decorated by life illustrations of men who have been raised up in strength by the call of weakness. Lincoln allied himself with the hapless Negroes in their slavery. Father Damien allied himself with the lepers on Molokai; Addams with the underprivileged; Gandhi with the outcasts; these crowning themselves with glory and honor. Jesus "for your sakes became poor," received sinners, espoused the cause of mankind's need, accepted the cross, and to unnumbered millions has become the Saviour. Those whom the world never forgets but long remembers are those who have cast their lot with the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind and have found their lives by losing them. Maybe it is an axiomatic paradox that alliance with weakness brings power. It is written, "My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Washington also allied himself with an eternal ideal, "Liberty and justice for all." He took hold of an ideal whose time had come and it made a country squire into the father of his country. Men are always immortalized by leaguering their poor powers with a truth that is rising to live. The only true astrology is hitching one's cart to the star of some eternal truth that must come. Washington allied himself to that far off divine event toward which not only thirteen little colonies moved but toward which the whole creation is still moving.

George Washington was not unearthly, a superman of supernal qualities. Jefferson wrote of him: "His mind was great but not of the very first order; his penetration strong though not as acute as that of Newton, Bacon, or Locke. No judgment was ever sounder but was slow in operation, being little aided by invention or imagination." He was a common man but he made for himself uncommon alliances.

Settle it then, that you nor I will ever be great alone. To gain the fulness of the measure of the stature of the man God has made and set for us to be, we too must make for ourselves the enhancing alliances: The alliance with the royalty of our own souls; alliance with the needs of our fellowmen; and the alliance with some great moral imperative.

Only in such alliances can we hope to inherit eternal life, for whoso joins hand and heart with these, his own immortal self, the deep need of fellowman, and the eternal verities, allies himself with God and walks the world in step with him.

I knew that death is but a door.  
I knew what we were fighting for:  
Peace for the kids our brothers freed,  
A kinder world, a cleaner breed.

—From a poem found on a scrap of paper in a slit trench in Tunisia, World War II.

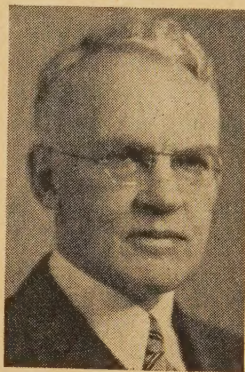
## The Riddle of Life

By GEORGE C. FETTER

*"I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind." (Moffatt: "Behold all is a vain and futile struggle." Ecclesiastes 1:14.)*

*"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13.*

THE BOOK of Ecclesiastes is a difficult book to interpret. In ancient times there was considerable debate as to whether it should ever be included in the Old Testament. It has been called the masterpiece of the night, good company for a rainy day. It was written



by a man who had waded through the bitter waters. It comes from a time when the Hebrew nation was oppressed by her enemies and religious faith was at a low ebb.

This book belongs to the literature of disillusionment. Running through it is a note of cynicism. You cannot find in it the courageous faith of Isaiah, the comfort of the 23rd Psalm, or the challenge of Paul's 13th chapter of I Corinthians. To this man life is a riddle. He is not sure whether the average man is master of his fate or the victim of circumstances over which he holds no control. What little faith he has he holds with a struggle.

I am glad this book was included in our scriptures because it represents a lower mood with which all of us have to battle. All of us at times are plunged into the valley of doubt and frustration. Experiences come crashing into our lives that try our faith to the utmost. When death separates us from a loved one, when sickness leaves a child crippled for life, when we find ourselves the victims of undeserved suffering, it is not easy under such circumstances to go on believing that God is a Father who watches the sparrow in its flight and sets an infinite value on every human life. The doubts and frustrations that try this man's faith sooner or later confront us all.

Some scholars think that more than one editor had a part in writing this book. In any case I am treating the book as a whole. Many men had a part in writing the constitution of the United States, but even though it had a composite authorship, we treat it as a single document.

### SURVEY OF LIFE

Let us consider now in detail the argument of the book. Imagine a man with a philosophical turn of mind sitting on top of a high mountain looking down on the great multitude of human creatures who crawl about on the face of the earth, and who endeavor to examine

man and all of his activities under a microscope. He tries to look at all of the facts of life, the evil as well as the good, and he asks himself these questions: "What is the purpose of our existence? What is the final goal of our effort and struggle? Is a satisfying human experience possible in this kind of world? Is man free to control his own destiny, or is he a victim of the biological forces that drive him from the inside and the impersonal economic and planetary forces that push him around from the outside?"

This man looks again and he sees many confusing and conflicting philosophies of life. If he were living today, he would see one set of men called Capitalists and another set of men called New Dealers. Here is one set of men called Socialists and another set of men called Communists. Which, if any, of these groups has a monopoly on political truth? Here is religion expressing itself in a variety of creeds and forms and organization. Here is one set of people called Fundamentalists and another set of people called Liberals. Here is one group called Catholics and another group called Protestants. Have any of these groups a monopoly on God's love and grace? How do we discover and test religious truth? Are a man's creeds and theological definitions merely the weapons of his pride with which he tries to beat his neighbor into submission? Is religion just a drama in which little men play at being God?

Or beneath all of this diversity of religious organization and creedal expression is there an essential unity? Is there a sense of guilt which leads all men to go in search of forgiveness and a Saviour; is there a sense of spiritual loneliness which leads men to go in search of an Eternal Shepherd; is there an inner restlessness which makes a man unhappy until he finds a spiritual cause worthy of his highest loyalty and faith; is there a hunger in the human breast that has led men in all ages to build altars, to erect cathedrals and to kneel in worship and prayer? Is there something behind all this that is very real? Has the universe an answer to the deepest cry of the human spirit?

Next, this man looks in upon himself and he exclaims, "I was brought into the world by biological forces over which I had no control. I had no choice in the selection of my parents. I have to accept myself and live within the bounds of the hereditary gifts and the hereditary limitations which fate has dealt me. Is a satisfactory and meaningful life possible within these hereditary boundaries?"

From a study of his own inner experience this man now turns to the great herd of human beings that inhabit the globe. Suddenly among them he witnesses a great stirring. And behold, the whole world is plunged into a great collective insanity. They mobilize all the inventions of science and all of the latest discoveries of their laboratories and turn them into instruments of destruction. With bomb and bullet, with block-buster and atomic power they rush at one another in a great hurricane of death.

Then he looks down through the centuries and he sees how one great civilization after another—Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Greece, Rome, Germany—all rose to power, enjoyed a few years of supremacy and then

went down into the international graveyard. And he asks himself the question, "Does man learn nothing from history? Does the same tragic fate await every civilization? Is there no way out of this vicious circle?"

Over and over again this writer repeats the same refrain: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and a striving after wind. Behold life is a vain and futile struggle."

The writer of this book is no youth. He is an old man who has carefully kept a diary. He has recorded all of his experiences, the bitter and the sweet. He tells us of the many trails he followed hoping to find the secret of happiness, only to find that all trails led into a blind alley.

### HE TRIES WISDOM

First he worshipped at the feet of wisdom. "I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; it is a sore travail that God has given the sons of men to be exercised therewith."

This man discovered that the more he studied, the less he seemed to know. The solution of one problem only opened up ten more problems yet to be solved. His little mind seemed so small and the great universe so inexhaustible. He also saw that from man's point of view all truth seemed to be relative. The theories accepted by one generation are exploded by the next. Our grandparents never would eat tomatoes because they were considered poisonous. Today we literally pour tomato-juice into our children. When I went to High School I was taught that the atom is the smallest particle of matter. Today we have split the atom. When I was a child I once went with my father to call on a woman sick with tuberculosis. Her physician had placed her in a room with all windows closed and the shades down. It was thought then that tuberculosis was caused by the dangerous night air. Today we open the windows and put the patient out in the sunlight. When I was in college it was believed that history was the study of a nation's creative achievement. Today a Harvard professor tells us that history is the study of a nation's collective action in the light of that nation's fears and frustrations. It is hard for us to get truth cut and dried, pinned and labelled. Long ago this man discovered that the wise man and the fool all come down to the grave together. Therefore, he concluded, the key to happiness is not to be found in mental brilliance or in intellectual cleverness.

### HE TRIES RICHES

Next this man resolved to try riches as the way to happiness. "I gathered me silver and gold and the treasure of kings and of provinces." I made a great fortune and surrounded myself with all the material comforts that money can buy. I surrounded myself with men servants and with maid servants. I saw that everywhere men went in hot pursuit of wealth even as flies flock around molasses. But just as I leaned back in my chair and said, "Soul, thou hast much goods, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry," I suddenly discovered that riches were deceitful and the cause of great worry. The more money a man had, the harder it was to find a se-

cure place to invest it. The larger his fortune, the more thieves there were ready to steal it. Furthermore, he lived in constant fear lest he be hit by a depression.

This man discovered also how the pursuit of wealth often produces a man with a one-track mind. A gold piece held too near a man's eye, blinds him to life's higher values. He may have money to buy the finest pictures but often does not appreciate those pictures as much as the poor artist struggling in a garret. He may buy a library of books. But his hot pursuit of gain prevents him from reading the books that he owns. This man learned what Jesus meant when he said, "It is hard for those who put their trust in riches to enter the Kingdom of God." As far as happiness is concerned, riches proved empty. And again he repeats, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

### HE TRIES PLEASURE

Next, says the writer, I tried pleasure. I said, "Come now, I will prove thee with mirth." I filled my table with wine and luxury. I got me men-singers and maid-singers and I satisfied every fleshly desire. But in the end, pleasure left me worn and weary. Furthermore just when I had my cellar stocked with every kind of delicacy, I came down with stomach ulcers from too much dissipation. Moreover pleasure left me with tired nerves and jaded appetite so that I lost my capacity for enjoyment. Worst still, these passing joys left my deepest hunger unmet.

Were this man here today he would rush to Hollywood as the center of mirth and happiness. There he would find a little girl who at four had become a popular star of the screen. At eight she was the number one box office attraction of the amusement world. At 13 she had three million dollars in the bank. At 17 she married and settled down in a beautiful home with a private swimming-pool in her back yard. Surely here is a young woman who can command every pleasure money can buy. But at 21 she stands in a divorce court with tears in her eyes and whispers to a newspaper reporter, "I thought once of committing suicide."

### THE UNIVERSAL FACT OF DEATH

Finally this man looks about him and observes the universal fact of death. He sees man and beast going down to the grave together. To this man death is a riddle. He is moved by neither fear of Hell nor hope of Heaven. Death to him is a leap into the dark, for who knows whether we go up or down. But this much he observes, the wise man and the fool, the rich man and the poor man, the Ph.D. and the moron all end up in the same cemetery.

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth the beasts; even one thing befalleth them all; as one dieth so dieth the other; yea they have one breath; and man hath no pre-eminence over the beasts. All go unto one place. All are dust and all return to dust again. For all is futility."

What are the lessons we can draw from this book? What is the conclusion of the whole matter? The answer is to be found partly in the book itself, although

the ultimate answer is to be found in the life, the message, and the Cross of Jesus Christ.

### THE VALUE OF DOUBT

This book teaches us the place of doubt in our religious growth and development. There are times when doubt may be a normal religious attitude. A certain amount of skepticism will help us clear the chaff out of our religious beliefs. All of the world's great prophets have had to battle their way through doubt. Even Jesus once cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

God has endowed us all with a critical faculty to save us from a blind and unintelligent faith. Many a young woman has been saved from marrying the wrong man because she had sense enough to doubt. Many a business man has been saved from investing his money in a rat hole because he has shaken his head over a gold brick proposition. Many a disciple has been saved from following a false Messiah because he used his critical faculty. The German people would be better off today if they had doubted the claims of Hitler as their national Messiah.

Doubt performs the same function in our religious development as a wrecking crew performs in our civic development. A little more than a year ago a group of business men in our city concluded that the old Lawrence bank building was inadequate to meet the demands of a modern city. The first thing those business men did was to bring in a wrecking crew. But those bank officials did not stop with the negative work of the wrecking crew. Instead, when the work of the wrecking crew was complete they brought in an architect with a plan, a group of engineers with a dream, and they replaced that old structure with a new bank building which will meet the commercial needs of a new generation. A wrecking crew has value only as it clears the ground for a new and a more adequate structure.

Many a student during his first year or two in college goes through a period of doubt. That doubt, if he handles it rightly, will prove a normal part of his religious growth and development. As he takes courses in psychology, biology, geology and looks at the world through microscope and telescope, he discovers that the world is much bigger than he dreamed and that his little two-by-four religious conceptions will not hold this new world to which he has been introduced.

But too many students make this mistake: They never get beyond the wrecking crew. They never replace that which has been torn down with a new and more vital affirmation. They haven't the initiative to think their way through to answers to such vital questions as, what claim has Jesus Christ on the life and loyalty of our modern youth? What is the mission of the Christian church in the twentieth century? What is the meaning of God in our every day human experience? What is the place of vicarious suffering in the redemption of a confused and troubled world? And as a consequence, these students end their lives as defeated and sophisticated cynics. Doubt has value only as it clears the ground for a new and more adequate faith.



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The world's greatest doubters all have cleared the way for a new and more intelligent faith. Columbus doubted that the world was flat and thereby cleared the way for the more accurate affirmation that the world is round. Galileo doubted that the sun moves around the earth and thereby cleared the ground for the more accurate hypothesis that the earth moves around the sun. Louis Pasteur doubted that all disease is blood-born and thereby cleared the way for the more accurate belief that most disease is caused by germs and bacteria. Jesus, in a dark moment of his life, cried, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But he prayed his way through to a new faith, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

### THE IMPORTANCE OF DUTY

The second lesson this book teaches us is that the key to happiness is to be found in the fact of duty. "Fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man." Man is a being with a sense of moral responsibility. When men and women ignore the demands of conscience and their obligation to God and humanity they suffer and then become cynics.

True there are many questions about life that we cannot answer. None of us can see the end of life from the beginning. But each of us can make the most of each day's opportunity as it comes. We can live up to the best light that we have today, and God will give us more light on the more difficult problems of tomorrow.

Here is a mother looking down upon her infant son. That mother cannot yet discern what his future gifts, talents, and aptitudes will be. Will he be a physician, teacher, minister, or mechanic? She doesn't know. But in high faith she can take up each day's duty as it comes. She can so plan her daily routine that her baby gets sufficient rest, a well balanced diet; and she can help him form his first prayer. And if she solves well the simple problems of his childhood, she thereby is preparing both herself and him to meet the more complex problems of his manhood.

There are many difficult problems in a church, there are many challenging problems in our community, there are many staggering problems in the world which none of us can solve alone, but which we could solve co-operatively if we would take our share of the problems as they affect us in our particular sector of life.

### COMMITMENT IS THE KEY

Finally the key to a happy and meaningful life is to be found in the commitment of our lives in faith. No man can live vitally, dynamically, or creatively on his doubts. In the last analysis we live by our positive beliefs. The *question-mark* attitude has its place in our intellectual and spiritual growth, but our highest achievement grows out of the attitude of the *exclamation point*—wonder, awe, reverence, and praise. The Kingdom of God, said Jesus, is like a treasure hidden in a field which when a man found, he went and sold all that he had that he might possess it.

Christianity calls us to a great launching. Man lives at his best only through the positive commitment of his loyalty. Until we are willing to make an all-out-commitment to the Christian way of life; until we learn to bow together in wonder, awe, and praise in the presence of a just and loving God, we will never discover the secret of victorious living. For the symbol of Christianity is not the white flag of a colorless neutrality. The symbol of Christianity is a cross which stands for the highest and holiest commitment in the world—a commitment which gives life purpose and meaning and power.

## It Can Happen to You

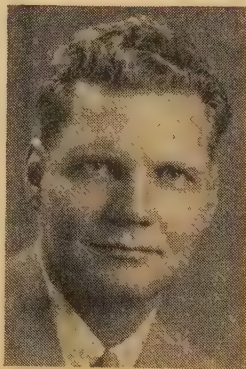
By REUBEN K. YOUNGDAHL\*

*"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matthew 17:20.*

IT WAS EARLY in the morning. I was leaving a home to which I had been called because the husband suddenly had been carried by the angel of death to the house of many mansions. A car stopped in front the house and out stepped another young widow to

whom I had ministered a short time before. With hurried step she approached me, and I saw an earnestness in her look of faith, the like of which I had never seen before as she said, "Pastor, has she got it?" And I knew what she meant.

This child of God, who had just suffered a similar circumstance, had been given the capacity to see beyond the petty circumstances of this day, no matter how difficult they were



for her. Now she wanted to be sure that another whose dreams were in danger of being shattered would be led to receive the assurance which she had that underneath were the everlasting arms of God and that his partnership was available for her also. So many of us are only fractions of what we can become because our lives are limited to that which we can do with our own strength.

A great prophet of long ago said that where there is no vision the people perish. Too many are dying too young, without the full realization of what faith can

\*Reuben K. Youngdahl is pastor of the Mount Olivet Augustana Lutheran Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota. This church is the first of the twelve churches to be studied by the editors of *The Christian Century* in "The Great Churches of America" series which will run during 1950. Sermons by the pastors of these churches, selected by a nation-wide poll of 100,000 ministers, will appear concurrently during the year.

do for their living. Too few see the limitless possibilities of what can happen when the strange, silent power of Almighty God enters into a life to give it the capacity to dream and to keep on dreaming in spite of anything because of the assurance that when one is in partnership with this God, he has the power to make these dreams come true.

### DO WE DARE TO DREAM?

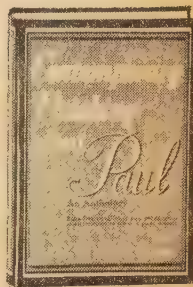
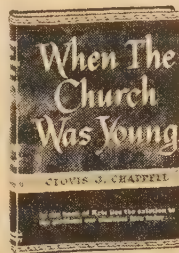
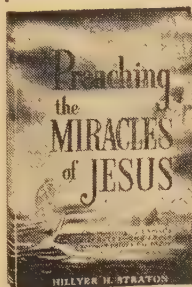
Do we dare to dream? In this practical, materialistic age we are always setting up premises to reach a logical conclusion. To some people, faith seems fantastic. If there is a God, they ponder fearfully, he is so far away in some distant heaven that it is unlikely he can be concerned with the everyday happenings of our lives. Yet, all the while, he is so near, so concerned over the heartaches, worries, and cares of his children and so willing to help in any circumstance of need. "Lo, I am with you," is a promise he has always kept. He will be with you with power if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed.

I often recall the Master walking the pathways of this earth going about doing good, men finding no fault in him and yet one day nailing him to the rough timbers of a cross. Then I hear his words, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." How utterly fantastic his dream appeared to be, at that moment, when all the forces of evil were arrayed against him!

Everybody knows the story of what has happened since; first, how he walked out of the prison door of the tomb, and then showed himself to those who doubted that he was alive. Others since have met him as down through the centuries he has been present in the form of the Comforter whom he promised to send, and whom many have chosen to be their life-partner because he gives them the capacity to dare to dream. There are many who begin the day with him as they speak to him in prayer; who take him with them to the office, or to the store, or on the streets; who counsel with him when problems arise; who seek to find his will as they study his word; who turn to him in trouble, and who share with him their joys. They don't leave him in the church when the Sunday service is over, for they need him every moment that they live; and at the end of each day when the record has been written, they thank him for what his power has done for their living. They penitently confess their mistakes, but they don't spend sleepless hours trying to solve their problems with their own feeble strength. They leave them with him and God, saying, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my life." This gives them the capacity to transfer their worries to him and to awaken on another day ready to live, prepared to dare to dream, knowing that this new day can be the greatest yet lived.

What a thrilling experience it is when one discovers the availability of this partnership with God. For many years a certain prominent businessman depended solely on his own strength, only to end in failure. Although he continued to make money, he failed to make a living. Then something happened. The Spirit of God

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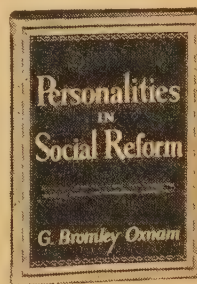
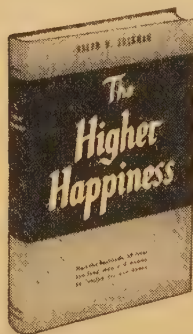
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came upon him. He listened to the Voice that was calling for him and surrendered. He found forgiveness from sin, release from fear, and the friendship of one who never fails. No longer was he to travel life's way alone. The ever-living presence of a power with limitless resources belonged to him. His life changed. He now breathed the spirit of prayer. His business associates had renewed confidence in him, and his own personal testimony gave the assurance that his life was lived with a song in his heart. There have been many who have entered into this partnership and who live victoriously because of it, and—it can happen to you.

### THESE DARED TO DREAM

Do we dare to dream in spite of anything? So often I hear people say, "If I had the capacities or the talents of someone else, I would dare to dream, too. But God passed me by when he distributed his gifts to humankind, and he can't expect me to contribute to life like someone else." Whenever I hear this line of thought, I think of those whom I have known in my ministry who put to shame this type of thinking. They stand before me as giants of faith.

There is that high school graduate, for example. All through school he had had partial eyesight, but with the help of his student friends he was able to get his lessons and come to the end of his senior year near the top of his class. Then just a few weeks before graduation he was struck with total blindness. The best doctors available told him that he would never be able to see again. His final examinations were taken orally. He ranked third highest in his class. On graduation night I was sitting on the stage. Single file the seniors marched down the aisle to the platform, and at the end of the class one lad leading another—the boy who was blind. That night when he arose to receive his diploma, never have I heard any audience give an ovation like the one I heard then. When the exercises were over, I went up to the boy hardly knowing what to say. How could he dream, being prisoned now forever in the darkness of night? Somehow he must have understood what I was thinking, for this is what he said, "You don't have to worry about me, Reverend. I have faith to believe that God will find some purpose for my living and will supply the power to make life worthwhile for me." Dreaming in spite of anything! It happened to him, and it can happen to you.

Consider another giant of faith, a crippled woman. When I first met her, she appeared to be just another hopeless cripple. She was bedridden with arthritis, but worst of all she had given up hope. Then something happened. As she continued to seek God in the Bible and in prayer, a spark of the Eternal lighted her life and gave her new vision. A voice seemed to whisper, "Life is worthwhile even for you—in spite of anything." Then the miracle happened. The power of God was channeled into her life. It wasn't long before she was able to be in a wheel-chair. Physically she was still crippled, but spiritually she had wings. Her whole mode of living changed. Her attitude became different. She now helped with the household tasks; and the last

time I saw her she was working an eight-hour day in her home assembling parts for a manufacturing company, happy in the life God had given her. As I visited with her one day and she told me what the tremendous power of God had done for her, I thought once more of the many who are yet groping in darkness, who have given up hope, whose lives are filled with despair because of shattered dreams, knowing no one to rebuild them.

But I also thought of the long line of people down through the ages into whose lives the Rebuilder of dreams had come to give them the capacity to keep the vision in spite of anything. This thought kept recurring: Cripple a man of faith and you have a Sir Walter Scott; put him behind prison bars and you get a John Bunyan; bury him in the snows of Valley Forge and you get a George Washington. Have a man of faith born in abject poverty and you get an Abraham Lincoln; burden him with racial prejudice and you get a Disraeli; put him in a locomotive roundhouse and you get a Walter P. Chrysler. These are men of faith who dared to dream and who kept on dreaming in spite of anything. So many times it has happened, and still happens—and it can happen to you.

### GOD GIVES THE POWER

God gives the power to make our dreams come true. When man attempts to live life by his own resources, he discovers that ultimately they run out. We are no match for the uncharted sea and the storms that might arise. The way is too difficult to navigate without the Master as the pilot to lead us on. There are too many opportunities to get lost and go astray, to make mistakes; too many chances to become afraid and to lose hope. Only God can make our dreams come true.

We need the assurance daily that he is with us to help, whatever our circumstances might be. What is your spiritual need? Are you burdened with sin? He will provide. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Are you afraid? He will provide. "Fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God." Are you concerned lest his way will not win? He will provide. "Fear not, I have overcome the world." Are you lonely? He will provide. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Does the thought of death haunt you? He will provide. "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth on me shall never die."

One dares to see visions and dream dreams in spite of anything when one has entered into partnership with God, for he has the capacity to make these dreams come true for us. And the seal of his promise is found on a little, far-away hill called Calvary where there stands the cross and where he gives the world an opportunity to take a look at his heart, hoping that this love will be the magnet to draw all men unto him and to his way of living.

Less than a year ago, I stood high upon a building in the city of Jerusalem seeing for the first time the place called Calvary. And yet, in a sense, it wasn't the first time, because there had been many occasions in my life when my heart had been there under the shadow

of that cross to find healing for life's wounds. But this was a new experience. Great emotions welled up within me. Vividly the picture came into focus—the howling mob, the frightened disciples, and all the devilry of man which was wrapped into this hideous pageant. Re-echoing down the corridors of the years came the words which he spoke, "Father, forgive them." And I thought, "What unlimited love!"

I must confess that as I stood there and these memories ran through my mind, I prayed the words of a little song that I had often sung with our young folks, "Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul. Thank you, Lord, for making me whole. Thank you, Lord, for giving to me Thy great salvation so rich and free." It was then that I seemed to hear him speak again, and what I seemed to hear were the words I had often used in a story. It is the story of a little boy who had gone out into the water too far. When he was brought to shore by the lifeguard, the little lad was unconscious. The lifeguard worked over him and finally brought him back to life. As the little lad lay upon the ground, he looked into the eyes of the one who had helped him and said, "Thank you, sir, for saving my life," the same words that I had spoken to the One on Calvary. The lifeguard looked at the little boy and answered, even as that day I'm sure the Master spoke to me, "Son, go out and prove that your life was worth saving."

The formula is so simple that frequently it is overlooked. "To as many as receive him, to them gives he the power." If ye have faith as much as a little mustard seed, anything becomes possible! Anything! There are those who dare to dream, dare to dream in spite of anything, because they know that God gives them the power to make their dreams come true. "If ye have faith as much as a mustard seed," it can happen to you!

It is always easy to unleash destructive emotions. Fear, jealousy, and hatred are quickly roused and seem to spread by their own momentum. Only a small spark is needed to set a forest fire. Once the forces of destruction are set in action, they are all but impossible to control. In their rage, they sweep away not only their intended victims, but also those who started the conflagration.

But to generate and preserve sane, constructive and beneficent attitudes is more difficult. Only through painful and continued effort do men learn to trust and to help one another. A forest can be wiped out by fire in a day; no forest can spring up overnight. The education of mankind in brotherhood is a long process that demands vision, courage and determination.

Brotherhood Week is one part of this continuing effort to strengthen the sense of fellowship and understanding among Americans who worship God in different ways. It is important because it is celebrated year after year, as part of the larger pattern of inter-credal cooperation. May Brotherhood Week in 1950 help us all to advance toward the building of the Kingdom of God.—*Dr. Bernard J. Bamberger, President Synagogue Council of America.*

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## Unpublished Sermons

**A** BASIS for a sermon on hope is found in the book of Ezekiel by Thomas Anderson, pastor of the Central Congregational Church in Atlanta, Georgia. The vision of Ezekiel's valley of dry bones, states Mr. Anderson, reflects the situations men face today. The world is full

### Can These Bones Live?

of skeleton forms of peace and goodwill like the bones in that valley. Now, as then, it seems impossible to bring flesh upon them and cause them to come to life. Why should there have been any concern about those dry bones? The answer is, they had a right to live. The spirit of God was in Ezekiel, and that made him unable to disregard that which had a right to be.

One of the immediate results of a true Christian faith is that an ordinary human being begins to believe that the "impossible" is possible. Paul, the apostle, writes concerning this faith saying, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Sometimes our communion is criticized because to some it seems to minimize believing in God and Christ and the life beyond, and over-emphasize the social gospel. It does not minimize faith in God and Christ and the life beyond, but it realizes that the victory which will overcome the evil in the world is the faith that some things which *are not* have a right to be and, like the dry bones of Ezekiel's vision, can be made to come to life in the world if and when men are inspired to activate their faith.

There is one more truth portrayed in this story. A miracle occurred. The bones came to life. But the important thing about that miracle was the part man had in it and the method of his participation. Ezekiel writes that he was told to prophesy upon those bones and say unto them, "O, ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, 'Ye shall live.'" Ezekiel did prophesy upon the bones, and he records the fact that "Bone came to bone and breath came unto them and they lived and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great host."

The significance of this lies in the defining of the word *prophesy*. It means the ability to see beyond the immediate and envision things to come, but it means more. The command was to "preach" to these bones, talk about what they could become. The lesson is clear. The chief way by which a man or a group of men are to collaborate with God in bringing the dry bones to life is by *preaching*.

Preaching was the chief method Jesus employed for establishing the Kingdom of God idea. St. Luke records that Jesus came *preaching*, that "He went throughout every city and village preaching and showing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God." The supreme importance of it in his mind is seen again when he commissioned his disciples; for he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach."

**D**OOTH Job fear God for naught? (Job 1:9). What is the value of religion? asks Austin H. Birch of Newport, Mon., in Great Britain. Here is his answer: When the book of Job was written, the common Jewish view of religion was that it paid one to be religious. You

### What Is Religion?

can see it right through the Old Testament especially the Psalms and Proverbs: "Yet never saw I the righteous forsaken or his seed begging for bread." "Thou wilt bless the righteous with favour." "The righteous cry and the Lord heareth them." The gist of these promises—and there are scores of them in the Bible—is this: The righteous flourish but the wicked come to a bad and a speedy end. Now the Jews must have known this wasn't true. This view of religion was due to the Covenant several times mentioned in Genesis. A Covenant is a two-sided legal document in which 2 parties are equally bound. God

promises Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob certain *material* blessings in return for certain undertakings on their part. The Jew took a very practical and business-like view of Religion. It was a contract, a bond. There was very little sentiment about it. In Genesis 28 we read, "And Jacob vowed a vow saying, *If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on . . . then shall the Lord be my God.*"

The Jew expected to get some very *material* and *practical* benefits out of religion. If it did not *pay* him to be religious, if he did not prosper by it then religion was not much use to him and he might as well be without it. This book of Job may have been meant by God to teach the Jew that such a view of religion was a very vulgar, cheap, commercial view. Job is an Old Testament type of Christ. Had not God said to Satan that Job was a perfect man, one that feared God and eschewed evil and that there is none like him in the earth? Job is a prototype, a foreshadowing of Christ himself. Both suffered as none before or since suffered and both kept their faith untarnished to the end. It is true that Job often moans, laments, and utters peevish complaints but in the end Job sees that Religion is not worth while *for what you can get out of it, but for what it can get out of you.*

Then, you may ask, "What was the good of religion to Job?" What was the good of religion to our Lord himself? It led him to poverty on earth and death on the cross. And so Job by his sufferings came to see God as he had never seen him before. He had "heard of him by the hearing of the ear," now his eye had seen him and he was satisfied. And that is the true, the real worth of religion. It strengthens our faith and throws us back upon God in our darkest hours. When it was all over, a wonderful thing happened. Job prayed for Eliphaz, Zophar and Bildad, his tormentors.

Job learns that the value of religion is not material reward. The good of Religion is that it brings us nearer to God and makes us trust him and Life even when we do not understand.

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# Squirrels

A Sermon for Children by John H. Blacklidge

WHEN I was seven years old my parents took me to visit the nation's capital, Washington, D. C. We went riding around town on a sight-seeing bus. It had an awning for a top and was open around the sides. On the bus there was a man with a megaphone who called out the important points of interest as we passed. Driving along a street bordered by tall, lovely trees, we were passing a large and stately one when the man with the megaphone called out. "That tree houses the largest family in Washington—of *squirrels*!"

Even as he spoke, I noticed that the limbs and branches were filled with frisking, chattering little animals. One would jump down to the ground, run away from the tree a few yards, then turn and race back and bound up the trunk, to balance saucily on a limb.

The whole world, for those squirrels, consisted of that one tree. They might stray away from it a short distance, but soon they were back. They didn't know anything beyond the tree. They didn't know, for example, that there were squirrels, all around the world, of many different colors.

Yes, there are. There is the *red* squirrel. This variety is to be found in the northern States and beyond to the very edge of the forests in Canada. There is the *gray* squirrel. It lives in the area from New England west to Minnesota. There is the *fox* squirrel which lives in our Middle states and in the South. Its coloring ranges from jet black through reddish gray. In Europe there is the *common* squirrel, found all over the continent. It is larger than our *red* squirrel but of the same reddish color. Then there are the squirrels of the hot countries, the tropics. They have many brilliant coats. In the orient there is one which, during the breeding season, changes its color from gray to bright orange-yellow. And, now and then, in any section of the world, a person will find an *albino* squirrel. That is one which lacks a coloring matter in the hair, skin, and eyes. Such a squirrel will be pure white.

The man on the bus with the megaphone said: "That tree houses the largest family in Washington—of *squirrels*!" And that family was getting along splendidly. To be sure, its problems were not so great as are those of boys and girls. For boys and girls are human beings.

It is true that boys and girls sometimes act like squirrels. They are full of fun. They frisk and romp and chatter. Everything considered, of course, boys and girls are greatly different from that family of squirrels in the tree. You, here today, know, for example, that there are other boys and girls in the world besides yourselves. And you know, too, that in addition to those whose skins are white, there are those whose skins are brown and yellow and red and black.

Also you know that you are children of God. And you know that you are children of God no matter what the color of your skins. You know that you belong to a great human family whose home is the whole world. So, you must learn to live with other boys and girls,

as one big happy family, all around the world, no matter what the color of their skins. For *all* the boys and girls in the world are God's children!

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What makes a good sermon? First, *a good man makes a good sermon*. The message must flow from a sensitive, thoughtful, studious, convinced, praying, growing Christian. A message that is belied by the preacher's life is a failure. He need not have attained perfection, but his sermon must reflect his own honest and sincere aspirations, beliefs, and practices. Self-will and personal pride must be relinquished. A sympathetic concern for the individual persons he meets daily and for those to whom he is preaching is essential to the making of a good sermon.

Second, *a well-planned and deeply experienced worship makes for a good sermon*. The sermon is a part of the worship, both in planning and in presentation. The minister should experience something of the mood of wonder, reverence, awe, adoration, and commitment as he works upon the order of worship as well as the sermon, and as he leads his people upon the destined day.

Third, *a good sermon must be a gospel sermon*, that is, it must be a proclamation of good-news. A sermon that has no notes of assurance, confidence, joy, is not a good sermon. "The Kingdom of God is at hand!" Proclamation of good-news and invita-

tion to decision go hand in hand. "Behold, I set before you this day life and death, good and evil . . . wherefore choose life!"

Fourth, *a good sermon results from good work in composition*. The minister must first of all get his purpose clear and specific in his own mind. A good sermon always aims at a definite goal. What is it the minister wants to help his people see, understand, feel? In what manner does he wish them to act? What does he want them to do?

When he has his own purpose clear and feels its urgency, he must find the words and illustrations which will make that purpose and its urgency clear to his people. He must seek for the most logical, coherent, and convincing development of his message. He will outline it. Then he will search for examples to make clear and convincing each point. He will relate the sections to each other with effective transitions and bring the whole thing to a climax in his conclusion, calling for joyous dedication of self and substance to God in the specific ways which the purpose of each particular sermon requires.

And let the conclusion be ever incomplete, an invitation to further adventure in thought, study, and action barely suggested in the sermon. Let it lead to creative activity on the part of the worshipers.

Throughout the composition, the language should be fresh and vigorous. Exact use of simple words is preferable to flowery but hazy language. The clever phrase is good if it makes the thought easier to remember, but cleverness or brilliance of speech for its own sake must be avoided. It soon detracts from the thought and tends toward superficiality.

Fifth, *a good sermon must be effectively delivered*. All the principles of good public speaking are relevant. Everlasting effort to improve the art of public address goes into the making of a good sermon. If a full manuscript has been prepared, there should be sufficient freedom from it for the experience of spontaneity and enthusiasm. The minister must be thinking with the people as he is speaking. He should be in the grip of the Spirit, not enslaved by his previous thought and composition. His outline or manuscript should be so familiar, when he enters the pulpit, that the work which has gone into it is liberating rather than confining.

**A** GOOD SERMON is *interesting*. Unless it wins attention it does not get to first base, especially in this day of the motion picture and the radio. To be interesting a sermon must be relevant to the experience of the listener. What the preacher says is important; the manner in which he says it is also important. In its substance and in its style the sermon must grip the congregation. The central idea must stand out clearly, the language must be expressive and the delivery enthusiastic. A good sermon has action—not necessarily physical action—but certainly action of thought. It must move, and it must bring the people to a favorable climax and conclusion.

A good sermon is *true*. In no realm



is truth more essential. A good sermon is true not only to the text and context, but to all life. It is true to history, to science, and to religion; and it is true to the preacher's personality. As Emerson observed, the preacher is not an actor; what he *is* speaks louder than what he *says*. The message that comes from his lips is but an affirmation of what he has already said through his life.

A good sermon is *helpful*. This is the final test. Unless it makes a spiritual contribution to the hearer, moving him to cooperate with God for personal and social salvation, it fails in its function. Like the Sermon on the Mount it ministers to the whole man, satisfying the mind, appealing to the heart, moving the will. To the sad it brings comfort, to the weak strength, to the erring correction, to the frustrated hope, to the distressed of body and soul relief and new life. It not

only tells what is good to do, but how to do it, and it inspires to the doing. Of course, even a good sermon cannot be all things on all occasions, but its success will be determined by the measure with which it meets the needs of the situation to which it is addressed.

A sermon is a living thing, born of the Holy Spirit. All that is said above assumes this. Although it have all technical virtues a sermon without a soul is sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

**L**ET IT echo the Word of God! We will ask no final revelation to answer all the questions life asks and to confound all the answers given by man's own wisdom, but an echo, at

least, of a Word not the preacher's own. We will listen to his *opinions* respectfully, but will wait for his *message* eagerly. Opinions, however well informed and brilliantly expressed, do not make a good sermon; but a sense of having a message, and of being a messenger, will make a good sermon of an otherwise ordinary talk. The humility and prayerful preparation of the messenger, his honest diligence



with the Bible, his sincere desire to offer the Christ-centered gospel, are more to preaching than mastery of logic and rhetoric. When the accents of the Holy Spirit are heard we will be moved to say, "Surely the Lord is in this place."

Let it deal with great concerns, leaving the trivial to entertainers, and the mediocre to a more appropriate occasion. We can turn on television to have our fancies tickled, or attend a popular lecture if we want a comment on passing concerns. But in a sermon we would be confronted with the central trunk-line truths, the great facts, events, and doctrines of Christian faith, and their implications to human duty. Speak to us of large concerns and we will overlook many faults of poor invention.

Treat the text with rigor, asking questions of it and demanding answers. Bound it north, south, east, and west,

and plough deep for the truth that hurts and heals. If your Scripture deals with one of the hard sayings, do not spare us, but let it fall hard upon our consciences; we need it even though resisting it, and, on a deeper level, we will be grateful to the preacher who breaks through our defenses. Spare us only those timid equivocal words and phrases that dull the sharp edge of truth's keen sword, "So to speak," "I wonder," and "probably." The languages of etiquette and diplomacy belongs to their arts; but in preaching let the truth be rigorous, precise in definition, and exacting in demand.

Above all, the good sermon must speak to our condition as persons, and prove applicable to contemporary times. Whether it "begins in Jerusalem and ends in Glasgow" or "begins in Glasgow and ends in Jerusalem," it simply must join together the biblical and the contemporary, the eternal and the temporal, God and our own selves. In common with the prophets and apostles, let the sermon have relevancy.

And the good sermon must be audible and intelligible, not minimizing all the arts of delivery that the messenger can manage. We will not object to "tricks of the trade" to command our flagging attention, if the tricks are honest. We will welcome surprising varieties of arrangement and uniqueness of style. We would prefer a generous range of reference, the sermon set in a broad frame of literary and historic knowledge, if that may be had in addition. But if it comes with simple effectiveness we will call it good.

**I** HAVE BEEN WONDERING for a good many years about "What Makes a Good Sermon." For that reason, I will read the other contributions to this symposium with eagerness. For the

more I wonder about a riddle it becomes. It is something like a pumpkin pie. I can enjoy a good one, but I neither know what makes it good nor can I make one myself. Like Mr. Robert Benchley, I have been "ten years in a quandary" on the matter.

One thing is sure. There is no such thing as a good sermon just considered by itself. A good sermon is one that accomplished the purpose for which it was made. Just as there is no such thing as an absolutely good screwdriver. A good screwdriver is one that fits the screw that is to be driven. If it does not do that, it is worthless, even though it is made of gold and platinum and set with rubies. So a sermon that fits the need it is designed to meet is good. If it does not do that, it is not good, even though all the thunders of Niagara resound through it.

I heard about a sermon once that I have always thought was rather definitely good. Perhaps that may give us some kind of a clue. At any rate, there was a good crowd present, and that always helps some; and they listened to the end; that is always a happy thought.

Not to be mysterious about it, it was Peter's sermon at Pentecost.

1. *It was aimed at a definite mark.* Peter did not sail gracefully around in the upper air like a sea gull. His talk went to its mark like a bullet. It was focussed on one point—to persuade skeptical hearers that the Jesus who had been crucified had risen and was God's Messiah.

2. *It had the Christian gospel in it.* It was loaded. No one went away



wondering what Peter had been talking about. What he said about Jesus was a terrific jolt to the mass of his hearers, but it was not a BLUR. It carried in simple, direct, forcible affirmation the HEART of the Christian evangel.

3. *The preacher's sense of his audience appears in every sentence.* He was talking to a particular group, Jews. His sermon was adapted to that group. He spoke their language. He used illustrations and arguments from their own interests and ideas.

4. *He got the response that every good sermon wins, "What shall we do?"* The sermon reached them; they were "cut to the heart." They well realized that the preacher was not indulging in vocal gymnastics or taking central breathing exercises in public. He wanted them to do something.

5. *His conclusion was specific and definite.* He said, "Repent and be baptized." His sermon did not end up in a verbal sunset. He did not conclude with a First Century equivalent of saying, "Well, it's nice to have seen you." He pressed for action. And he got it.

All in all, these qualities of Peter's sermon seem to say to every preacher, go, and do thou likewise.

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## Brotherhood Week

**R**ESPECT for human dignity is the central issue in the world struggle today.

America is dedicated to the conviction that all people are entitled by the gift of God to equal rights and freedoms even though they may differ in religious persuasion, in social and political views or in racial origin. Our greatness is and will be measured by the degree of our recognition of this fundamental truth.

Millions of people in our world are living in slavery. They are subject to the iron rule of despots who make the state supreme and who constantly violate God-given human rights. Free people everywhere are horrified to witness the subjugation of their fellow human beings by the totalitarian states. No group is being spared. Protestants, Jews, Catholics and Orthodox are being crushed into submission. Statesmen of democratic spirit and writers, teachers, and scientists of independent mind are being destroyed. The conscience of the free world is appalled by their shocking martyrdom.

At such a time our people, with others of like devotion to freedom and human dignity, must demonstrate

a greater measure of fraternity and unity than ever before. There probably has never been a time in history when true brotherhood was so indispensable to the welfare of our own nation and to the peace and freedom of the entire world.

It is for these reasons that I am happy to accept the Honorary Chairmanship of Brotherhood Week 1950. I urge all Americans to ponder well the true meaning of brotherhood and I hope that all citizens will join with you as General Chairman and with the National Conference of Christians and Jews to help make justice, amity and understanding the daily practice in our nation.

It seems to me that Americans can make no greater contribution to all mankind than to stand united, without a state imposed uniformity, for the achievement of that peace and freedom for which all people everywhere pray.—*Harry S. Truman, To John L. Sullivan, General Chairman for Brotherhood Week, National Conference of Christians and Jews, New York 16, New York.*

## Sermon Illustrations

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

### Living Without Purpose

**T**HE LATE Dr. Glenn Frank, when President of the University of Wisconsin, summed up the futility of life when it has no redeeming purpose, as he described a busy life, yet one not geared to the great business of life: "He is like a turn-stile, always in motion but never arriving; always talking, but never saying anything; having a hundred irons in the fire, but none of them very hot; and with the few that do sizzle, he just burns his fingers." *Frank A. Court, St. Paul Methodist Church; Lincoln, Neb.*

### The Peace of Deep Waters

**O**UR lives are like the waters of a lake, for they all have many moods. For the most part folks live rather placid, quiet lives. But there are stormy times. Galilee could whip up a storm very quickly, and many people are like that. Time and circumstances, action and reaction of lives upon each other control our moods often under glowering skies and deeply disturbed emotions. The recent record dive of the Benthoscope reaffirmed a phenomenon long suspected. While surface waters may be violently disturbed, far

below the surface there is majestic calm. An inner core of unchanging peace and stability always has been man's most precious possession when he has had it. This is the "peace of God that passeth understanding."—*Alfred W. Wishart; First Presbyterian Church; Warren, Ohio*

### The Face of God—In Christ

Dr. William L. Stidger writes about a little boy being put to bed and expressing his fear of the dark. "But darling," his mother remonstrated, "you have God with you all the time." "Yes, I know," said the child, "but I want somebody with a face."

### Giving Children Stones

Jean Beaven Abernethy, musing not only on the predicament of her own children, but of all children in the modern world, writes, "Watching children accept the world adults have made for them was a poignant experience. It was like watching a child open a package, when all the time you knew inside it was a stone, not bread."—*Theodore Cuyler Speers; Central Presbyterian Church; New York, N.Y.*

### The Great Lie

**H**ERE is a picture of a group of executives gathered about a table, and on the table is a bottle. The claim is that leading executives drink Calvert, or prefer Seagram's. But we know these men never got to their present place of success by drinking Calvert or Seagram's, or any other brand. Let's be fair, produce the right pictures, the true pictures. Go down to Halsted and Madison streets and round up the men down there. Get their picture, and say, "These are the man who preferred Old Crown or Old Kentucky, or some other brand. Go to Oak Forest and get pictures of the invalids, the bed-ridden patients there—the penniless objects of public charity and publish these pictures under the title, "I am here because I drank Sunny Brook, or I preferred Calvert." Liquor propaganda continues to print pictures of glorious hospitality and fine fellowship, men in evening dress and beautiful women in rich, attractive gowns. This, they claim, is where the best people meet and the finest friendships are formed. It's a lie!—*Clinton C. Cox; Drexel Park Presbyterian Church; Chicago, Ill.*

## Sermon Notes

By VIRGIL A. KRAFT

WHERE in human society do we find the most kindness, the most generosity, the most tolerance? Where do we find the warmest hearts and the best neighborliness? The answer is, among the common people. Class lines are not drawn by the common people; wars are not started by the common people; rules to keep negroes out of hotels and halls are not made by the common people. It isn't common people who scheme to keep millions of their neighbors homeless.

The common people may not be altogether lovely; they may not have brilliant minds or perfect manners; and most of them may be slow. But the common people are honest and fair and reverent. They know what justice is. The common people erect no social fences, or withdraw themselves; and when a man like Jesus comes along, they hear him gladly.

A GROUP of tourists stood on the edge of the Grand Canyon looking out at the magnificent view. It was so vast, so different, so tremendous that none could talk. They were almost reverent. Suddenly a group of geologists, with notebooks, field-glasses, and a musty odor, shuffled up to the observation point where the tourists were standing, and one of them exclaimed, "Great scott! What a terrible erosion!"

WHAT do we see when we look at people? Are clerks in stores just clerks to us? Are mechanics just mechanics? Do we see policemen as fathers and husbands? Do we see beyond uniforms and creeds and skins to behold the common humanity in people? Can we say with Jesus as we look at the crowds about us: "Behold my mother and my brethren"? How great is our sympathy?

ONCE there was a young violinist who could play beautifully in his own room, but whenever he tried to play in public he would become so nervous he would have to quit. "What do you think about when you play?" asked his teacher. "I think about my playing," replied the young violinist. "But you mustn't think about your playing," said the teacher; "think about the people, the people who are hungry for beauty and inspiration; think about the man whose week has been spoiled by ugly tempers and failures; think about discouraged students and tired workers; think about all those who need a song in their souls. Don't think about your playing, think about the people, your people, your hungry people and then feed them with the beauty of your music."

IF I were to name the greatest single threat to human happiness, I would say it is the *tyranny of the obvious*. We are slaves to first impressions. Most of our judgments are based on appearances. If you look at a country town in November when the snow has turned to slush, *obviously* the town is a dirty, monotonous village where people surely are slow and old-fashioned, where no one reads good books or listens to the Philharmonic Symphony, and where young people leave for the city as soon as they can.

Or, if you look at a college boy who hasn't yet felt the weight of more burdens than he can carry, it is obvious, according to his light-hearted laughter, his uncombable haircut, his high chin, and low grades that he is nothing but an ungrateful spendthrift of somebody's money.

Or, look at a traditional book-wear professor on whom rests the crushing burden of being able to answer questions, and *obviously* he lives a dull, unhappy life.

Or, look at a yelling mob of angry men who trample fences, smash windows, break through doors, and batter people with clubs, and obviously they are simply wild animals, "troussered apes," whom no one dares to cross or argue with.

Or, take a look at yourself when you are weary and exasperated. Obviously you are an inferior type of person with no basis for intelligence or charm. You are simply a nobody with a few good clothes, perhaps, and some very patient friends.

Or look at the rough, ruthless ways of nature, her piles of debris called mountains, her floods and blizzards and twisting winds, and *obviously* the world is nothing but a forgotten speck in a cosmic dust storm.

But the obvious is a false impression, whether we are looking at the world of nature or the bewildering ways of man. Somehow, therefore, we must look with honest eyes beyond the surfaces of things—behind the fearful, belligerent face, beyond the ugliness of a cluttered little town, and beyond the frightening forces of nature to discover that there are magnificent realities and possibilities hidden in the depths of everything.

I AM convinced that bad behavior is due either to *madness, misinformation, or monotony*. Madness being a wild, irrational reaction to something; misinformation representing the plight of any half-educated person; and monotony being the result of futility.

THE world has always been full of scribbled pictures of God. The atheist usually is a person who took a look at some infant theologian's

scribbled picture of God and instead of smiling at it with gracious benevolence and a sense of humor, he began to say that he didn't believe in God.

LAST summer I had an experience which demonstrates how to some people mole-hills of trouble appear to be mountains of disaster. When Mrs. Kraft and our two little girls went visiting for several weeks, I was given the responsibility of taking care of the family dog. At one time I was very fond of dogs. I think I would be yet, if they didn't eat, bark, smell, or shed hair!

One afternoon the little scoundrel ran off, and I had to waste a very precious hour hunting her. When I found her I gave her a sharp spat and talked to her in such a manner as to give the impression that I was not at all pleased with her behavior. When I got home, I was still talking like that. A little girl next door came running to me. "Hi, Mr. Kraft; did Pam run away?" "Yes," I said, "she did. She's a bad dog." Then I gave the dog a mean look. The little girl looked worried. "What are you going to do with her?" "I'm going to take her to the basement." The girl began to tremble, and then she said, "Are you going to cut her up?"

That little girl was having a terrible experience which was all out of proportion to the real situation. Most of our troubles are like that. They seem more terrifying than they really are.

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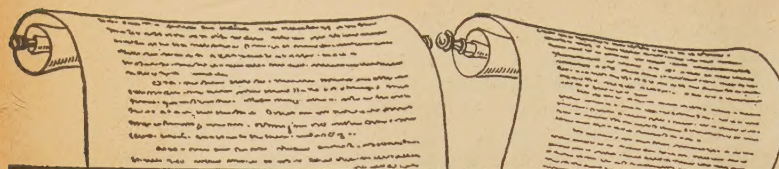
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